## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

**1. NAME**
- COMMON: Tower Rock
- AND/OR HISTORIC: Grand Tower

**2. LOCATION**
- STREET AND NUMBER: 1 mile south of Wittenburg, east 1 mile on gravel road from County Hwy. A
- CITY OR TOWN: Section 20 - Township 34N - Range 14E

**3. CLASSIFICATION**
- CATEGORY (Check One): Site
- OWNERSHIP: Public
- STATUS: Occupied
- ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Yes

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**
- OWNER'S NAME: United States of America
- STREET AND NUMBER: 801 19th Street N.W.
- CITY OR TOWN: Washington
- STATE: D.C. 20006
- CODE: 24

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
- COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Office of Recorder of Deeds, Perry County Courthouse
- STREET AND NUMBER:
- CITY OR TOWN: Perryville
- STATE: Missouri 63775
- CODE: 24

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
- TITLE OF SURVEY: Missouri Historic Sites Survey
- DATE OF SURVEY: 1963
- DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: State Historical Society of Missouri
- STREET AND NUMBER: Corner, Hitt and Lowry Streets
- CITY OR TOWN: Columbia
- STATE: Missouri 65201
- CODE: 24
Tower Rock is a large projection of limestone eroded by the Mississippi River to its current configuration.

The rock is located in the Mississippi River 150 feet from the Missouri bank.

It is formed of Bailey limestone deposited on the bottom of a shallow sea in the Devonian Age, 350 million years ago. (Dr. George Viele, Associate Professor of Structural Geology, University of Missouri, interviewed by Charla A. Piggott on Sept. 16, 1969.)

Tower Rock is approximately 80 feet high at the normal river level. Its sides are broken and jagged due to the river's erosional action, but the top supports a growth of grasses and shrubs.

Due to the uplift of the Ozark Dome which began in the Pleistocene Age, the river was able to cut a deeper trench in the resistant bedrock. As a result, a relatively narrow channel was created at this point and numerous rock pinnacles (including Tower Rock) remained as evidence of the river's vigorous cutting action. (Dr. George Viele, Associate Professor of Structural Geology, University of Missouri, interviewed by Charla A. Piggott on Sept. 16, 1969.)

The rock ledge all along the bank has been quarried, leaving only a small remnant of the original ledge opposite the rock. The three rock pinnacles which existed near Tower Rock have been destroyed because of their hazard to navigation.
Tower Rock is primarily significant as the site where Father Jean Buisson de Saint Cosme planted a large wooden cross in 1699. The cross was erected as a symbol of Christianity and also to dispel the Indian belief that evil spirits inhabited the rock. The cross was clearly visible to all the river travelers. St. Cosme, Francois de Montigny, and Ambrose Davion voyaged down the Mississippi on a mission to the Indians of that area in 1698-99. From this incident, the perilous rock became known as La Roche de la Croix (Rock of the Cross) (Elisabeth Clark, Tower Rock, 1963, p. 16, and Louis Houck, A History of Missouri, 1908, p. 226.)

Tower Rock is also significant as a landmark on the Mississippi River noted by other early river travelers. Rising 80 feet above the water, it poses a serious navigational hazard and is considered to be the most dangerous spot on the river. The river is forced into a narrow channel between the rock and the bank, and the turbulent waters create a treacherous whirlpool.

Father Jacques Marquette described this stretch of river in the journal of his voyage down the Mississippi in 1673. According to him, the Indians made sacrifices whenever they passed the rock because they believed a manitou (an evil demon) lived there waiting to devour travelers. (Louis Houck, A History of Missouri, 1908, p. 161.)

Early western travelers, Stephen H. Long, Maximilian-Prince of Wied, Edmund Flagg and Henry Schoolcraft also noted the hazardous rock in their journals. (State Historical Society of Missouri, Historic Sites Files: Perry County.)

Before the invention of steam power, the river boats could not ascend the river at this point because of the whirlpool and the danger of being crushed against the rocks. The boats had to be pulled around the cape on the Illinois side and this gave the Indians an excellent opportunity to attack the boatmen. (James Hall, Notes on the Western States, 1838, pp. 48-9.)
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Clark, Elisabeth.  
   Tower Rock.  
   Topeka, Kansas, 1963.

2. Hall, James.  
   Notes on the Western States.  
   Philadelphia:  
   Harrison Hall, 1838, pp. 48-9.

   A History of Missouri.  
   Vol. III.  
   Chicago:  
   Donnelley and Sons, 1908, p. 161.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>CORNER</td>
<td>LATITUDE</td>
<td>LONGITUDE</td>
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</table>
| NW                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | 37° 37' 54" | 89° 30' 53"
| NE                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | 0° 01' 00"  | 0° 01' 00" |
| SE                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | 0° 01' 00"  | 0° 01' 00" |
| SW                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | 0° 01' 00"  | 0° 01' 00" |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:  
CODE:  
COUNTY:  
CODE:  
STATE:  
CODE:  
COUNTY:  
CODE:  
STATE:  
CODE:  
COUNTY:  
CODE:  
STATE:  
CODE:  
COUNTY:  
CODE:

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Charla A. Piggott, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION:  
State Historical Survey and Planning Office

Missouri State Park Board

DATE:  
Nov. 13, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN:  
Jefferson City

STATE:  
Missouri

CODE:  
65101

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ]  
State [X]  
Local [ ]

Name:  
Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

Title:  
Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer

Date:  

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:  
Keeper of The National Register

Date:  

SEE INSTRUCTIONS
TOWER ROCK

6.

Missouri State Historical Survey (state)

1969

Missouri State Park Board

P. O. Box 176

1204 Jefferson Building

Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 Code: 24
8.

TOWER ROCK

On February 24, 1871, President Grant set aside Tower Rock for public purposes and it is now under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior. (Felix E. Snider and Jess E. Thilenius, Tower Rock, 1968, pp. 28-30.)

Tower Rock was such an integral part of life along the river that many legends and stories have been woven about its colorful history.
TOWER ROCK

9.


6. Viele, Dr. George. Associate Professor of Structural Geology, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. Interviewed by Charla A. Piggott, September 16, 1969, filed at Missouri State Park Board, 1204 Jefferson Building, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Missouri.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM  
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMON:</td>
<td>Tower Rock</td>
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<tr>
<td>AND/OR HISTORIC:</td>
<td>Grand Tower</td>
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<th>2. LOCATION</th>
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<td>STREET AND NUMBER:</td>
<td>One mile south of Wittenburg, east 1 mile on gravel road from County Hwy. A</td>
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<tr>
<td>CITY OR TOWN:</td>
<td>SWk Section 20 - Township 34N - Range 14E</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2. North arrow.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Latitude and longitude reference.</td>
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</table>
TOWER ROCK

COUNTY: Perry
LOCATION: 1 mi S of Wittenburg, E 1 mi on gravel road from County Hwy. A
OWNER: Missouri Conservation Commission
ADDRESS: 2901 N. Ten Mile Drive, Jefferson City, Mo.

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.: 11-15-69
DATE SENT TO JEFF. CITY: 12-08-69
DATE SENT TO D.C.: 12-22-69
DATE OF REC. IN D.C.: 12-31-69
DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER: 02-26-70
DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE (AND PRESENTOR):
DATE FILE REVIEWED:
Tower Rock is primarily significant as the site where Father Jean Buisson de Saint Cosme planted a large wooden cross in 1699. The cross was erected as a symbol of Christianity and also to dispel the Indian belief that evil spirits inhabited the rock. The cross was clearly visible to all the river travelers. St. Cosme, Francois de Montigny, and Ambrose Davion voyaged down the Mississippi on a mission to the Indians of that area in 1698-99. From this incident, the perilous rock became known as La Roche de la Croix (Rock of the Cross).
Photo

Missing